

Color the yellow-backed dollar bill valueless

By Roger Boye

SOME MORE QUESTIONS from readers on coins and currency and, hopefully, some helpful answers:

Q—I've got two \$1 bills that are yellow on the back, not green. Did they make a mistake at the Mint?—A.L., Chicago.

A—Similar questions have been received recently from other readers, so someone in this area may be treating \$1 bills to change their color.

If the reverse side of United States currency is coated with a strong acid, the green color will change to blue. If the bill is exposed to an alkaline solution, the green becomes yellow.

Since these color changes are made after the bills enter circulation, they have no value to collectors.

Incidentally, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing makes currency, not the Mint, which makes coins. And, the bureau apparently never has printed the wrong color on a piece of currency.

Q—In my collection is a 1957-D penny that seems to be covered with zinc. How valuable is it?—S.E., Roselle.

A—Most likely, someone "doctored" your Lincoln cent by coating it with a zinc-colored material, or treating it with a strong chemical. Such coins altered outside of the United States Mint are worthless to collectors.

Q—I'm interested in starting a collection of coins from ancient Rome and Greece. Do you know of any books that might help me?—L.S., Skokie

A—Several books are available, as you will note by checking a coin store, hobby store, or library. Three titles are "Ancient Greek Coins," by Zander H. Klawans; "Roman Coins and Their Values," by David R. Sear; and "Ancient Coins—How to Collect for Fun and Profit," by Ted G. Wear.

Questions about coins and collecting? Send them to me, Room 414, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Av., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Please do not send coins.